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time than this hath been.* Besides, the place is in the midst of the great *Scottish* plantation; and I fear, at this time, where some men's zeal hath run them already, not only beyond their wits, but almost forth of their allegiance too, it might furnish them with something to say in prejudice and scandal to his Majesty's government, which, for the present indeed, is by all means to be avoided.

"Yet, considering we often observe, that may be had in due season with ease which, mistimed, may prove unsafe, and very difficult to obtain, my most humble opinion is, your Majesty might do passing wisely to let this devotion rest awhile, till there may be a fitter opportunity apprehended, by which to effect your Majesty's satisfaction therein; which gracious temper and forbearance shall also (in my judgment) dispose and bow all nearer your Majesty's desire, than any other way that can for the present be taken.

"And I beseech your Majesty to honour me with this belief, that my duties, in fulfilling your commands, are so broad awake, that in all or any, where I may have the happiness or ability to serve to your Majesty's contentment, I shall not need the solicitation of my Lord of Antrim, or any other whatsoever, to incite me thereunto, there being nothing abroad which can put me so fast and diligently on, as my own great cheerfulness at home, which, unmindful by any, shall, through all your gracious appointments, express me with all faith and attention.

"Your Majesty's

"Most obedient and most humble servant,

"WENTWORTH.

"Dublin Castle, 10th October."

(See *Stratford's Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 221, 222.)

The purgatory, then, had been for some years "absolutely taken away," by authority of the Irish government; and the Lord Deputy, though so anxious to oblige the Queen, was apprehensive that any attempt to revive the devotion there, with the sanction of the executive, would be attended with danger, from the feelings entertained on the matter by the inhabitants of the surrounding country; and yet, after this second suppression, the devotion has a second time been "in some manner restored," and multitudes throng to the place on the faith of a false tradition, so long since exposed and exploded by their own best authorities, in the hope of receiving healing virtues, and balm for their spiritual wounds, from its imaginary privileges. Three hundred and fifty years ago the Pope, the representative of the Bishop of Clogher, and the head of the Franciscans in Donegal, combined their efforts to put down the scandalous fabrication. But yet it remains to this day an object of cherished religious veneration, an object of confidence and faith, on which many a poor soul casts itself to find consolation and repose; and those multitudes of pilgrims, year after year, assemble there, no influence which they look to for guidance forbidding them, to do homage to the vain delusion.

And is there in this no danger to their poor, misguided souls? Or if there be, how is it that those violent efforts which we see so often applied—and so often, too, applied successfully—to prohibit the reading of the Scriptures of Truth, are never directed to the overthrow of what must now be acknowledged to be so manifest an imposture? Why do none of those high authorities which are so earnest and zealous in the former cause, never, even for decency's sake, direct their energies to enforce truth and circulate light in the quarter where it is so much wanted? When such pains are taken to watch Scriptural schools, and congregations of converts, in order to warn off from attending them any who may yet be in any measure under the influence of Rome, why is not a teacher appointed to reside on the way to the lake and island, whose duty it should be to tell all pilgrims going that way that they were trusting to an imposture, condemned by a Pope of their own, and having no other connection with St. Patrick than what was invented by the cunning of designing and covetous men, and received by the simple and credulous, in spite of the testimony to the contrary of the learned and respectable? And how excellent a work would it be, in connection with such negative teaching, to tell the poor people what was the real purgatory that God appointed for St. Patrick and for all mankind; to tell them that the Word which cannot lie, assures us that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; and that by it those that were afar off, in every place, without pilgrimage or visiting of sacred shrines, are brought nigh unto our Heavenly Father, and have secured to them acceptance, remission of sins, and unfailing peace.

AURICULAR CONFESSION.

THERE is, perhaps, no point in controversy between the Churches of Rome and England, in which the laity have a deeper or, as it were, a more personal interest than that of the alleged necessity of the practice of confession, as at present enjoined by the Church of Rome. We propose to consider it with the same calm

attention, and sincere anxiety to arrive at truth, which we hope has characterized our investigations upon the other points which from time to time have been treated of in our pages, and we invite the assistance of our able and learned correspondents in the discussion, convinced that whichever side truth lies on, cannot fail to reap the benefit of an earnest and searching examination, conducted in a candid and temperate spirit.

The Council of Trent, in its 14th Session, 1551, chap. v., as incidental to the (disputed) Sacrament of Penance, asserts that "the universal Church has always understood that the entire confession of sins was also instituted by the Lord, and is of Divine right necessary to all who have fallen after baptism;" and by its 6th canon decrees, that "if any one shall deny, either that sacramental confession was instituted, or is necessary unto salvation, of Divine right, or shall say that the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, which the Catholic Church hath ever observed from the beginning, and doth observe, is alien from the institutions and command of Christ, and is a human invention, let him be Anathema."

Canon vii.—"If any one shall say, that in the Sacrament of Penance it is not, of Divine right, necessary unto the remission of sins, to confess all and individually the deadly sins, the memory of which, after due and diligent previous meditation, is held, even those which are secret, and those which are opposed to the last two commandments of the Decalogue, as also the circumstances which change the species of a sin; but that such confession is only useful to instruct and console the penitent, and that it was of old only observed in order to impose a canonical satisfaction; or shall say, that they who strive to confess all their sins, wish to leave nothing to the Divine mercy to pardon; and, finally, that it is not lawful to confess venial sins, let him be Anathema."†

Canon viii.—"If any one shall say, that the confession of all sins, such as the Church observes, is impossible, and is a human tradition, to be abolished by the pious; or that all and each of the faithful of Christ, of either sex, are not obliged thereunto once a year, according to the constitution of the great Council of Lateran, and that, on this account, the faithful of Christ must not be persuaded to confess during Lent, let him be Anathema."‡

We propose, in the first instance, to investigate the truth and accuracy of the assertion, that the *universal Church* has *always* understood that sacramental, or secret confession to a priest, was instituted by our Blessed Lord, and is, therefore, of Divine right, necessary to salvation; and next whether it be true that the Catholic Church hath observed from the beginning the practice of confessing secretly to a priest alone. The importance of these inquiries we think cannot be estimated too highly, as, if they be once answered, on satisfactory evidence, in the affirmative, no one who believes in Christianity can refuse obedience to it as duty; and we shall begin by admitting in our judgment, the affirmative, if true, may be established, either by the express words of Holy Scripture, or by legitimate inference from what is written, interpreted by such an uniform understanding of the universal Church as is referred to in the foregoing passages.

The "quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus," what has been held "always, and everywhere, by all Christians," we at least ever shall deem worthy of the deepest respect, and presume to be true, till the contrary is demonstratively established.

The first question, then, is—Can there be found in the Holy Scriptures any clear or express institution of confession to a priest, by our blessed Lord or any of his Apostles? The second is, Is it capable of proof that the universal Church hath always considered as divinely instituted, and as such always observed, from the times of our Lord and his Apostles, the practice of confessing secretly to a priest alone?

I. As to the first question, we may observe, that the proof of the affirmative does properly lie with those who assert that such a passage is to be found in the Scriptures. The Council of Trent relies alone upon the 20th chapter of John, 22nd verse, which we shall presently consider; but it may, perhaps, be satisfactory to our Roman Catholic readers first to know what eminent Roman Catholic writers have said upon the subject, which may

* Conc. Trid. Sess. xiv. Can. vi.—"Si quis negaverit, confessionem sacramentalem vel institutam vel ad salutem necessariam, esse jure divino; aut dixerit: modum secreta confitendi soli sacerdoti, quem Ecclesia Catholica ab initio semper observavit et observat, alienum esse ab institutione et mandato Christi, et inventum esse humanum, Anathema sit."

† Can. vii.—"Si quis dixerit, in sacramento Penitentiae ad remissionem peccatorum necessariam non esse jure divino, confiteri omnia et singula peccata mortalia, quorum memoria cum debita et diligenti præmeditatione habetur, etiam occulta et que sunt contra duo ultima Decalogi præcepta, et circumstantias que peccati speciem mutant, sed eam confessionem tantum esse utilem ad erudiendum et consolandum penitentem et olim observatam fuisse tantum ad satisfactionem canonicam impendendam; aut dixerit, eos qui omnia peccata confiteri student, nihil relinquere velle divine misericordie: ignoscendum, aut demum non licere confiteri peccata venialia, Anathema sit."

‡ Can. viii.—"Si quis dixerit, confessionem omnium peccatorum, qualem Ecclesia servat, esse impossibilem, et traditionem humanam, a piis obolendam; aut eam non teneri omnibus et singulis utriusque sexus Christi fideles, juxta magni Concilii Lateranensis constitutionem semel in anno, et ob id suadendum esse Christi fidelibus, ut non confiteantur tempore Quadragesimæ, Anathema sit."

assist them in considering both questions with greater freedom, than if we were to rely exclusively on our own reasonings, or merely Protestant authorities on the matter.

Maldonatus,* the Spanish Jesuit, a very learned writer and celebrated divine of the 16th century, who died in 1583, reckons up seven different opinions about confession, among the writers of the (Roman) Catholic Church—1. Of those who denied it to be of divine right, but held it to be useful in the Church, as Rhenanus and Erasmus. 2. Of those who make it to be only of ecclesiastical institution, and this, he says, is the opinion of all the canonists. 3. Of those who thought it came in by apostolical tradition, of which he reckons Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury. 4. Of some divines who hold it to be instituted only by St. James. 5. Of others who hold it to be of Divine right, and not instituted by the Apostles, but *insinuated* by Christ, and for this he quotes Alexander Hales and Bonaventura. 6. Of some who thought it instituted in the Old Testament. 7. Of those who hold it instituted by Christ, but not as a precept, but by way of counsel or advice only, and for this he mentions Scotus and his followers.

Natalis Alexander, a Roman Catholic theologian of high character (De Sacr. Confess., p. 229), admits that, from the ninth to the thirteenth century, many Catholics did hold that confession to God alone was sufficient to obtain remission of sins.

Peter Lombard,† generally called the Master of the Sentences, Bishop of Paris in the twelfth century, tells us that learned men were of different opinions, because the doctors of the Church seemed to deliver not only divers things, but contrary things—(i. e., they had no certain or constant tradition about them)—St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, and Prosper being in favour of confession to God only, while St. Augustine and Leo the First seemed against it; and Gratian, in his Decretum, (which was presented to Pope Eugenius III., who is said to have testified his approbation by conferring on him the Bishopric of Chiusi),‡ de Penitent. Dist. 4, states the authorities both ways, as to whether confession to a priest be necessary, or whether confession to God alone be sufficient, and, after summing up all the arguments and authorities, both from the Scriptures and the Fathers, concludes all by leaving the matter to the reader's judgment; for both opinions, he saith, had wise and pious defenders, § adding—in chap. 90, from the Penitential of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 690, that "some say that we ought to confess only to God, others that we ought to do it to the priest too, for each is not without great fruit in the Church; so that, let us confess our sins to God, who is the forgiver of sins, saying, with David, 'I have made known my transgression to thee, and mine iniquities have I not hid. I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord, and so thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin' (32nd Psalm)—yet, nevertheless, the institution of the Apostle should be followed by us, that we should confess our sins *one to another*, and pray *for one another*, that we may be saved. Therefore, confession which is to God alone purges away sins, but that which is made to the priest teaches how they are purged; for God, who is the author and giver of health and salvation, sometimes gives (this medicine of penitence) by an invisible administration of his power, and sometimes by the operation of physicians."

The Council of Cavillon, in the days of Charles the Great (Charlemagne), A.D. 813, held nearly the same words, stating that some confessed their sins to the priests, but not fully, acknowledging that it still remained a question whether men should confess to God only, or to the priests also; we give their words in the note.¶ It is abundantly clear, we think, from the foregoing authorities, that the doctrine of the *divine insti-*

* De Sacr. Penit. De Confess., c. 2. Tom. ii, p. 35. Lugd. 1614.

† Pet. Lomb., Sent. Lib. iv., dist. xvii., pp. 102, 107, Lugd. 1618. "Primo enim queritur utrum absque satisfactione et oris confessione, per solum cordis contritionem, peccatum alicui dimittatur. Secundo an alicui sufficiat confiteri Deo sine sacerdote. Tercio, an laico fidei facta valeat confessio. In his enim aliis docti diversa sentire videntur; quia super his varia ac pene adversa tradidisse videntur Doctores."

‡ Panciroli de claris Legum Interpretibus, p. 317. Ed. Hoffmann, Lipsi, 1721.

§ "Quibus auctoritatibus vel quibus rationum firmentis utraque sententia satisfaciatur, et confessionis institutio, in medium breviter exposuimus. Cui autem harum potius adhaerendum sit, lectoris judicio reservatur. Utraque enim fautores habet sapientes, et religiosos viros."—Decret. 2pas. Causa xxxiii., quæ. iii., cap. 89. Note.

¶ These words seem to have been interpolated, for it will be observed that no such words as "medicine of penance, or penitence," occur in the Latin decree of the Council of Cavillon, which is evidently taken from the above, see infra.

¶ Sed et hoc emendatione egere perspeximus; quod quidam, dum confitentur peccata sua sacerdotibus, non plenè id faciunt. Concil. Cabilon II. cap. 32. Sacr. Concil., Tom. 17. Lut. Paris, p. 1278. Quidam solummodo Deo confiteri debere dicunt peccata, quidam vero sacerdotibus confitenda esse percensent: quod utrumque non sine magno fructu intra sanctam fidei Ecclesiam; ita duntaxat, ut et Deo, qui remissor est peccatorum, confiteamur peccata nostra, et cum David dicamus, Delictum meum cognovit tibi feci, et iniquitatem meam non abscondi. Dixi, confitebor adversum me iniquitatem meam Domino, et tu remisisti impietatem peccati mei, et secundum institutionem apostoli, confiteamur alterutrum peccata nostra, et oremus pro invicem ut salvemur. Confessio itaque, quæ Deo fit, purgat peccata: ea vero, quæ sacerdoti fit, docet qualiter ipsa purgantur peccata. Deus namque, salutis et sanitatis auctor et largitor, plerumque hanc præbet sua potentie invisibili administratione, plerumque medicorum operatione.—Concil. Cabilon II. cap. 33, p. 1279.

* i. e., than 5 years or so at least, Viscount Wentworth having come over as Lord Deputy of Ireland. In A.D., 1533, before which time the purgatory had been suppressed.

tution of auricular confession, whether true or not, was for many centuries disputed in the Church, and was far from being held "always and everywhere, by all Christians." Let us return now, however, to the Council of Trent.

The Council of Trent, we have observed, based the institution of confession, by Divine right, on John xx. 22—"Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." If they could have found, in the whole body of Scripture, any text more to their purpose, we may fairly conclude, they would have founded the institution on it, and not on John xx. alone.

In our last number, in treating of the Power of the Keys, we gave our readers important extracts from Roman Catholic divines, going some way at least to the explaining of that text; but what we have here to consider is, whether it teaches the duty of Auricular Confession, as insisted on by the Council of Trent. That it does not do so expressly, or with that clearness which our Lord used in the institution of the undisputed sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, is plain, for not a word either of penance or confession is to be found in the passage; and Cardinal Cajetan, in his notes on this text, confesses, "that no precept of sacramental confession is contained in it," which subsequent writers, such as Vasquez, try to explain by saying that Cajetan means no more than that it cannot be proved out of this place. Ambrosius Catharinus*, Bishop of Minori, however (on Cajetan, p. 444), says, "that neither there nor in any other place doth Cajetan allow that Auricular Confession can be proved out of Scripture."

St. Bonaventure†, a learned writer and Cardinal, denies that Christ himself appointed the confession of sins, and, in commenting on this passage of St. John, says, "it was not enough to have it implied in the priest's power, because it being a harder duty than absolution, it required a more particular command, which even Cardinal Bellarmine himself admits (De Penit. l. 3, c. 12, p. 451), when he says, "it is one of the most grievous and burdensome precepts, and, therefore, it must have a Divine command to enforce it"—a mode of reasoning in which we cannot agree, deeming St. Bonaventure's argument to be much the stronger of the two—viz., that the harder the duty was, the more clearly it ought to have been expressed.

Bellarmino's words are so remarkable, that our readers may think them worth quoting at length.†

Alexander de Hales§ a celebrated divine, known by the title of the *Irrefragable Doctor*, who died in the Franciscan monastery at Paris, in 1245, observes, in opposition to those who said that Christ instituted confession when he conferred the power of the keys, that if Christ had intended a command of confession, in John xx., it

would have been expressed to those who are to confess, and not to those who are to absolve, as he did to those who were to be baptized, in John iii. Except a man be born of water, &c., so Christ would have said—"Except a man confess his sins, &c., which we confess we think is an argument not without show of reason.

But if the doctrine in question cannot be found by these eminent writers of the Roman Church itself, in the express letter of Scripture, still it may be said that it is to be inferred from thence by what may be called *necessary implication*. We think our readers will be rather disposed to agree with St. Bonaventure, that it is not enough to have auricular confession implied in the priests' form of absolution; and *Gabriel Biel*§ confesses he cannot find sufficient force to conclude the *necessity* of confession from the power of absolution being granted; to whose authority we might add many others, such as *Nicol de Orbellis*, *Scotus*, *Guido Brianson*, and *Jac. de Almain*, who all debate the matter at large, and give up the point, that Christ's granting a power of absolution makes it by implication a duty to confess to a priest; the last, *De Almain* (in 4 Dist. 17), admitting that "it is a false proposition that, when a form of judging is given, others are bound to submit to it; for all that follows is, that their sentence is valid if they do submit."

Having thus shown what eminent Roman Catholic writers have said, as to this mode of proving, by *inference*, that confession to a priest is a duty of Divine institution, perhaps we may venture to add something of our own on the matter, first premising that it may be fairly asked, when we are urged to rely for proof on a mere *inference*—1, Whether that can properly be said to be of Divine institution, and necessary to salvation, which depends on an inference, and is proved only by an *innuendo*? 2, Whether it be reasonable to assert that our Saviour there institutes a sacrament of penance, including auricular confession, when not only auricular confession, but the whole matter of such a sacrament is left undefined? As to the first, we think it will not be denied that the word "institution" means the expression of a *positive* command, in contradistinction to a mere *moral* or *natural* duty; and as the whole reason of such command lies in the will of the legislator, if that be not plainly discovered, the command cannot be said to be *instituted*. "Where there is no law there is no transgression," and a law is, in effect, no law if it be not sufficiently promulgated. Is it not a strange thing then, to tell us of an institution by implication only, and yet at the same time to tell us that the matter so (pretended to be) instituted is no less than absolutely necessary to the salvation of sinners, as the Council of Trent does in the decrees in question?

As to the second question, the Council of Trent itself lays it down that this sacrament of penance consists of matter and form; the form is the priest's absolution, but the matter or materials of this sacrament are contrition, confession to the priest, and satisfaction, in performance of the penance enjoined by him. Now it is evident that not only auricular confession, but also contrition and satisfaction, are wholly omitted and passed over in silence by the Evangelist St. John. And is it not a very strange thing that our Saviour should be supposed to have instituted a *new sacrament* without alluding to the matter or materials of it at all, saying nothing either of the form or of any one of the three matters in which this sacrament of penance was to consist?

We have still, however, to meet the argument, that as our Lord hath made the priest a *judge* of men's consciences and conditions, it is necessary, in order to prevent him from proceeding blindly and indiscriminately, that he should know the merits of the cause, and not only understand the matter of fact, but all circumstances which may aggravate or extenuate it, which can only be attained by the confession of the party. Therefore (it may be argued), auricular confession is as necessarily implied in the text as absolution or retention of sin is expressed by it.

Those of our readers who have perused, in our last number, the article on the Power of the Keys, will, perhaps, think that the *judicial* character of the priesthood is not a matter to be assumed as proved, even according to ancient Roman Catholic writers, much less that they are *exclusive judges of the state of the consciences* of all their fellow-men, and that without appeal to the judgment of God himself. We think we have demonstrated, not only by the Holy Scriptures but the Fathers, that God alone can truly be said to forgive sins, and that the power of the priest is to declare forgiveness *conditional* on true faith and true repentance, and that, even such *declaratory* sentence is not infallible, but subject, like all other things human, to error, and therefore limited by the clause "*clave non errante*" meaning, that it is only of force when the matter is judged with right judgment and no error is committed in the use of the keys.

We would, however, wish to go farther, and ask first—Is it certain that, even on such a confession as the Council of Trent requires, the priest will be able to form such a judgment as can be safely depended on, considering especially the intricacy of some cases and the ig-

norance of some priests? The great St. Augustine, at any rate, did not think so, when he said—"To what purpose do I confess my sins to men who cannot heal my wounds? To a set of men inquisitive in inquiring into the lives of others, but indolent in amending their own. And how shall they (who know nothing of my heart but by my own confession) know whether I say true or no? For no one knows what is in man but the spirit of man that is in him." We shall presently see what St. Chrysostom and others say on the same subject. But we would ask secondly—What proof is there that the priest is made a judge of secret sins in thought only, as well as of open sins and public scandals, of which the Church took cognizance for the good of society, and the public honour of God? If a certain class of sins is reserved for the bishop, why should not sin in thought only be properly reserved for the tribunal of God? Thirdly—We would ask, why, if it be true, as the Council of Trent admits, that sins might be, and were remitted, *before* the times of our Saviour, upon contrition only and confession to God, why might not confession to God *now* be sufficient, without confession to the priest also, since remission does not, in the nature of the thing itself, by their own confession, imply confession to a priest? It is scarcely to be believed that pardon under the Gospel is not to be procured upon as easy terms, at least, as it was before, unless, indeed, the contrary be shown very plainly and by something stronger than a mere inference, even if the inference were of a much more stringent and unavoidable character than we have shown it to be.

II. We admit, however, that we have still to inquire historically, whether it be true that the Catholic Church has always observed, from the time of our Lord and his Apostles, the practice of confessing all sins secretly to a priest alone?

This we shall not evade, but we are compelled, by the length to which this article has already run, and the importance of the subject, to postpone considering the historical question until our next number.

TALK OF THE ROAD—NO. XI.

Well, on Monday evening, the 4th of April, Pat was walking out to Jem's house, and he fell in with Jem, leading home a pair of Mr. Nulty's horses from the harrow.

"Why, is it working you were to-day, Jem?" said Pat.

"Deed is it," said Jem; "sure there's plenty to do, and the work so backward."

"Well," said Pat, "there was not a turn doing in Kilcommon to-day; so I thought I would walk out, and have a bit of talk with you."

"And what are they idling for in Kilcommon," said Jem, "more nor here?"

"Sure it's keeping Lady-day, we were," said Pat, "and Father John wouldn't allow plough or harrow to work itself."

"Well, now," said Jem; "I heard the queer talk to-day, between Mr. Nulty, that lives in this parish, and Mr. Smith, that holds the big farm in Kilcommon parish. Mr. Smith was coming up the road, and he stopped to speak to Mr. Nulty; 'and is it working you are to-day, Nulty?' says he. 'Yes,' says Mr. Nulty, 'sure Father Sheridan gave it out in our chapel yesterday that we might all work to-day, for he said the crop was too late.'"

"Well, I'll bet you sixpence," says Mr. Smith, "that Father Sheridan has farming of his own to do." "Indeed he has," says Mr. Nulty, "as much as any of us." "Ay, that's the reason of it," says Mr. Smith, "and that's always the way; whatever's their convenience is our duty; and if I'd only known that this morning," says he, "I'd have had every plough in Kilcommon at work." "And why shouldn't we work to-day, and the work so backward?" said Mr. Nulty; "ne'er a priest in Ireland should stop me, to please himself."

So then Pat and Jem had some talk about why Lady-day could not be kept on the 25th of March, because it was Good Friday: but we need not tell what they said about that, because we see one Brannigan has written a letter about it.

"And then," says Jem, "I wonder did God Almighty mean that the priests should be laying down laws for us to work, or not to work, just as suits their own convenience and their own crop?"

"Well," says Pat, "if he did, wouldn't he put it in the Bible, or wouldn't the blessed Apostles say something about it? And there isn't a word about it in the Bible, that I can find; and sure, if it was in the Bible, wouldn't the priests tell us that much out of the Bible anyway? But I know what is in the Bible, and we are not to work on the Sabbath-day, and we are given leave to work on the other six."

"Ay," said Jem, "it's not much the priests seem to

* *Catharinus in Cajet*, p. 444, Lugd. 1512. "Circa confessionem primum admittitur sum, quod ubicunque in Scripturis legitur peccatorum remissionem, non patitur de confessione auriculari intelligi, et particularem peccatorum."

† *S. Bonaventuræ Cardinalis. Oper.*, Tom. V., Lugd. 1668, Lib. IV., Sent. Dist. xvii., Art. 1. Ques. III., p. 223.

§ *Item quero, ubi instituit, si dicas ibi, Agite penitentiam; Contra &c.*

Item alii dicunt quod instituitur ibi, ubi misit leprosum ad Sacerdotes. Sed contra, &c., &c.

Item dicunt alii, quod ibi: "Accipite spiritum sanctum."—Joan. 20 c.: quia domus instituit sacerdotes, et potestatem absolventi eis dedit, precepit per consequens alios, ut ad eos peccata deferrent. Sed contra. Difficilius est confiteri, quam confessionem audire; ergo magis specialiter de hoc debuit mandatum dare. Queritur igitur, quare Christus non instituit confessionem expresse, sicut alia sacramenta.

Id. p. 224, "ex his que dicta sunt, quatuor possunt rationes elici, quæ Dominus immediate confessionem, et expresse non instituit. Prima quidem, quia non oportuit. Secunda vero, quia in hoc volumtariam esse debere docuit. Tertia, quia est sacramentum recidivantium. Quarta, quia quantum est de se, est opus humanum. Unde credo, quod non per se instituit; et si dicatur instituisse, hoc est intelligendum insinuando et auctoritatem dando."

† "The second reason is taken from the difficulty of confession; for if there be any one matter in the Catholic Church more grave and difficult than another, without any doubt, that thing is confession. For what can be more troublesome, what more burdensome, than that even the most powerful kings and princes should be compelled to unfold to priests (who are men like themselves) all their sins, however secret, however base, however shameful, however dreadful even to him who confesses them, and to abide by the judgments of these same priests, and to undergo the penalties prescribed by them? So great is the difficulty of the whole thing, that it is altogether incredible, either that the prelates of the Church would have dared to impose such a law, or that the people would have been persuaded to receive it, and to observe it for so many centuries, unless it had been of Divine command, of Divine institution, of Divine promise. Therefore, the authority was Divine."

The original is as follows:—

Bellarmino de Pen. lib. iii. c. xii. tom. iii. p. 451, col. 1615. "Secunda ratio sumitur a difficultate confessionis, nam si qua res est in Ecclesia Catholica, quæ gravis ac difficilis videatur, sine dubitatione ulla confessio est. Quid enim molestius, quid onerosius, quam ut cogantur etiam viri Principes, Regesque potentissimi, sacerdotibus, qui et ipsi homines sunt, peccata sua omnia detegere, quamvis arca, quamvis turpia, quamvis pudenda, quamvis horrore etiam ipsi confitentis adferant, et eorumdem sacerdotum iudicio stare, ac mulctam ab illis inunctam subire? Tanta profecto injuria rei difficultas est, ut nullo modo credibile sit, aut Ecclesie Prasides ausuros fuisse legem ejusmodi ferre, aut populus persuaderi potuisse, ut ejusmodi legem acciperent, et tot jam seculis observarent, nisi Divinum imperium, Divina institutio, Divina promissio accessissent. Igitur Divina fuit auctoritas."

§ *Alex. de Ales, Summa Theol. pars. 4ta, q. 18, num. 3, art. 2, p. 567, Col. Agrip., 1622.* "Alii dicunt, quod instituit confessionem quando contulit potestatem clavium, Matt. xvi. et Joan. xxi. Contra in institutione confessionis, debuit dari preceptum sive inditio confitentibus, non illis qui non debent confiteri, sed audire confessiones, sicut factum est in institutione baptismi baptizandis. Joan. iii."

* *Biel in 4 Sent. Dist., 17, q. 1, a. 1, Lugd. 1514.*

§ "Quid mihi ergo est cum hominibus, ut audiant Confessiones meas, quasi ipsi sanaturi sint omnes languores meos? Curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam, desiderium ad corrigendam suam. Et unde sciunt, cum a meipso de meipso audiant, aut verum dicam? Quando quidem nemo scit hominum quid agitur in homine, nisi spiritus hominis qui in ipso est."—S. August. Confes. Lib. x., c. 3, Tom. I. p. 171. Paris, 1679.

† Such a conversation did take place between two farmers on that day, who lived in different parishes.